

REMARKS

An error with reference to the coupling aperture 34 pertinent to Figs. 5 and 6 in paragraph [030] has been corrected (from "35") by amendment. This involves no new matter.

In response to the requirement for restriction, applicant provisionally elects the form categorized as Group III, the claims applicable to which are claims 9-12. Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of the requirement, however, as to Group II (claims 5-8), inasmuch as the subcombination/combination distinction that has been made in the Office action is not material in this art or to those claims. Applicant is essentially claiming the blade geometry in all of claims 5-12 as evidenced in the bodies of lead claims 5, 7 and 9. Other elements are added for use in reciprocating the blade in different configurations because the driving mechanisms of related systems are different. But in each instance an eccentric drive pin is used that is to engage in a groove, whether it fits into the top, back or side of the blade unit. "Keratomileusis" is only another name for "tangential corneal incision", by which a flap is cut in the surface tissue of the eyes. Applicant, in specifying a "holder" or "driver/holder" in some of the claims is not claiming a new combination, because it is evident from the art that applicant has cited that prior units have employed many variants of blade plus driver/holder. These elements are recited only for proper protection of applicant's invention as to variants of which may be used with different machines.

In other words, the expression in claim 9 of a "microkeratome blade" for "lateral corneal incision with a reciprocating motion" clearly places the blade of claim 9 in the general category of "keratomileusis" devices and makes specific reference to a drive groove unnecessary. The applicable art is clearly defined and idiosyncratic, and a single search will cover all of claims 5-12 in Groups II and III, so that reconsideration of the Requirement for Restriction is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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